

Ceremonial Speech
by Kayla Cross

Today, we've gathered together to honor the memory of a woman.

A woman so special // that one day when she took off,

God decided he was tired of sharing her, so He didn't let her come back.

A woman whose spirit was always soaring // even when her feet were planted firmly on the ground.

A woman, who with her sweet soaring spirit, managed to change the lives of just about every person she met, if not every person.

She was strong // she was loud // she was smart and quick-witted // the feistiest person you've ever met. But she was also gentle // and humble // and warm. And she managed to do all this being only four foot ten. I guess what she lacked vertically, she made up for horizontally.

You know, if I were to poll you right now and ask: When was Jeri Cross her absolute happiest?

I'm pretty sure the consensus would be when she was flying her single-engine plane. /// Other than being surrounded by her family, I don't think I could tell you of anything else in this world that made my grandmother more at peace than when she was sailing through the skies.

We all knew that everything in her world revolved around the sky. /// Whether it be her office decorum, her hobbies, or her favorite song, she never failed to keep the sky as her focus.

You know // some of my favorite memories of her take place at an airport. I can remember being only four years old and going up with her and singing "Mr. Golden Sun" into her CB radio which she then projected through the loud speaker for all of the airport guests and employees.

I enjoyed cleaning her hangar and organizing her piloting awards. // But my favorite thing about her pilot license was the countless trips to Disney World. Sixteen times before I was six.

But I know the flight that I'm going to remember the most, // is her last.

Like I previously mentioned, our sovereign God was through sharing her.

/// That's how amazing she was! God, couldn't even stand being without her.

He found it all too tempting when she was right there at his fingertips,

// so he just snatched her up. He really is a selfish God.

I would like to acknowledge her husband today, A. G. Cross // because I know that she accredits everything she was to him.

I know that I can have a successful marriage because of the remarkable example the two of you have set for me.

She dedicated this song to you, but I know she meant it when she said you truly were

“the wind beneath her wings.”

Some people say the sky's the limit. /// She found that unacceptable. //

“A limit?” she would say. “There's no limit. The limit is where you draw the line.”

I know that on that February day, I considered the limit's line drawn. // But I've pushed forward, and I stand before you today, having pushed past that line, and able to record many trips in my flight log. I owe everything I am to her.

Jerilyn Ann Peeler Cross, was many things to all of us.

To some of you, she was a co-worker.

To some of you, a boss (I feel bad for those that fall into that category).

To some, she was a mentor, a role model, a teacher.

To some of you she was just all around fascinating.

To some she was a friend.

To one, she was a husband. To one, she was a mother.

To me, she was the world's greatest grandma.

Regardless of your relationship with my grandmother, though, // I know without a doubt

// we can all agree on one thing: she will never be forgotten.

So I would like to thank you today, for making this possible,

and for allowing the memory of my precious grandmother

to have landed on your hearts.